

# PARADISE LOST

---

## THE VERSE

The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age,<sup>o</sup> to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers,<sup>o</sup> fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

## BOOK I

### *The Argument*

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into hell, described here, not in the centre<sup>o</sup> (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter<sup>o</sup> darkness, fittest called Chaos: here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; they rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in

Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandaemonium the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit (thence)  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater man°

Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing heavenly muse, that on the secret top°

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire°

That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed°,

In the beginning how the heavens and earth°

Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill°

Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed°

Fast by the oracle of God; I thence° (of)

Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar

Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues°

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer

Before all temples the upright heart and pure,

Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first

Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread

Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss°

And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark°

Illumine, what is low raise and support;

That to the height of this great argument°

I may assert eternal providence,

And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view

Nor the deep tract of hell, say first what cause°

Moved our grand parents in that happy state,

Favoured of heaven so highly, to fall off°

From their creator, and transgress his will°

For one restraint, lords of the world besides?

Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal serpent; he it was, whose guile

Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived

The mother of mankind, what time his pride°

Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host

Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring

To set himself in glory above his peers,

He trusted to have equalled the most high,

If he opposed; and with ambitious aim

Against the throne and monarchy of God

Raised impious war in heaven and battle proud

With vain attempt (him) the almighty power

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky

With hideous ruin and combustion down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell

In adamant chains and penal fire,°

Who durst defy the omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night°

To mortal men, he with his horrid crew

Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf

Confounded though immortal: but his doom

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain

Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes°

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay°

Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:

At once as far as angels' ken he views

The dismal situation waste and wild,°

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round°

As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible

Served only to discover sights of woe,

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes°

That comes to all; but torture without end

Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed°

With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:

Such place eternal justice had prepared

For those rebellious, here their prison ordained

In utter darkness, and their portion set°

As far removed from God and light of heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.°

dove  
nest  
image

20  
Holy Spirit = nurse  
conflation

30

unbreakable

→

the promise  
is there

not said -  
this is the  
agent

ascension of  
ambition 40

Satan = Him  
Caesura makes it  
capitalized

falling,  
speed

9 days, like the Titans  
rebellious 50 against  
Zeus

- When I consider

Inferno. Dante

no faith

punishment is  
ordained  
and so

distance from  
god

O how unlike the place from whence they fell!  
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed  
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
He soon discerns, and weltering by his side<sup>writhing</sup>

One next himself in power, and next in crime,

*not 7 flies* Long after known in Palestine, and named  
Beelzebub, To whom the arch-enemy,

80

And thence in heaven called Satan, with bold words<sup>first speed</sup>  
Breaking the horrid silence thus began.

*Satan to  
Beelzebub*

If thou beest he; but O how fallen! how changed<sup>How Satan looked</sup>

From him, who in the happy realms of light  
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine  
Myriads though bright: if he whom mutual league,<sup>while in heaven</sup>

*revery deals*

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope

And hazard in the glorious enterprise,  
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined

90

In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest  
From what height fallen, so much the stronger proved

*dire?*

He with his thunder: and till then who knew  
The force of those dire arms? yet not for those,

Nor what the potent victory in his rage

Can else inflict, do I repent or change,

Though changed in outward lustre; that fixed mind

And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,

That with the mightiest raised me to contend,

And to the fierce contention brought along

Innumerable force of spirits armed

100

That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,

His utmost power with adverse power opposed

In dubious battle on the plains of heaven.

And shook his throne: What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; the unconquerable will,

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield:

And what is else not to be overcome?

That glory never shall his wrath or might

Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace

With suppliant knee, and deify his power,

Who from the terror of this arm so late

Doubted his empire, that were low indeed.

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

110

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

That were an ignominy and shame beneath

This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods  
And this empyreal substance cannot fail,

Since through experience of this great event

In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,

We may with more successful hope resolve

To wage by force or guile eternal war

Irreconcilable to our grand foe,

Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy

Sole reigning holds the tyranny of heaven.

So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,

Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:

And him thus answered soon his bold compeer.

Beelzebub: O prince, O chief of many throned powers,

That led the embattled seraphim to war

Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds

Fearless, endangered heaven's perpetual king;

And put to proof his high supremacy,

Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate,

Too well I see and rue the dire event,

That with sad overthrow and foul defeat

Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,

As far as gods and heavenly essences

Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains

Invincible, and vigour soon returns,

Though all our glory extinct, and happy state

Here swallowed up in endless misery.

But what if he our conqueror (whom I now

Of force believe almighty, since no less

Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)

Have left us this our spirit and strength entire

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,

That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,

Or do him mightier service as his thralls

By right of war, whate'er his business be

Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,

Or do his errands in the gloomy deep;

What can it then avail though yet we feel

Strength undiminished, or eternal being

To undergo eternal punishment?

Whereto with speedy words the arch-fiend replied.

120

*a. n. / a.*

*luxury, extravagance.*

*God = tyrant*

*2 narrative voices*

*a. n. / a. 130*

140

*= God = conqueror*

*Perforce*

*satisfy  
"enthrall"*

150

*heaven is lower /  
more shameful  
than hell*

Satan.

“ Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable  
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,  
To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
As being the contrary to his high will  
Whom we resist. If then his providence  
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
Our labour must be to pervert that end,  
And out of good still to find means of evil;  
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps  
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.  
But see the angry victor hath recalled  
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit  
Back to the gates of heaven: the sulphurous hail  
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid<sup>put down</sup>  
The fiery surge, that from the precipice  
Of heaven received us falling, and the thunder  
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,  
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now  
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.  
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,  
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.  
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,  
The seat of desolation, void of light,  
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,  
There rest, if any rest can harbour there,  
And reassembling our afflicted powers,  
Consult how we may henceforth most offend<sup>our</sup>  
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,  
How overcome this dire calamity,  
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,  
If not what resolution from despair.”

Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate  
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large  
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge<sup>meanwhile, and</sup>  
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,

leaves battle

hail  
bulletsfinds place  
for rest/  
retreatgood  
tacticianSatan's long  
monstrous  
other-  
body parts -  
"other parts"as person in  
ministers of  
single structure of  
always being Providence  
Contrary 160away from home  
refugeespernicious  
pathetic falling  
describing  
battle180  
pathetic falling  
Satan a true  
orator / poet /  
rhetoriciansalvaging 190  
resourceful  
Satan's lying down  
motion

meanwhile, and

Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den<sup>200</sup>  
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast<sup>200</sup>  
Leviathan, which God of all his works<sup>200</sup>

Leviathan  
an unknown  
sailor anchoring  
into the whole  
thanking it's  
land

Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:  
Him haply slumbering on the Norway foam  
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,  
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind<sup>illusion of scale</sup>  
Moors by his side under the lee, while night<sup>misinterpretation</sup>  
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.

So stretched out huge in length the arch-fiend lay

Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence<sup>highly 210</sup>

Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will<sup>pedagogical</sup>

And high permission of all-ruling heaven

Left him at large to his own dark designs,<sup>this is punishment</sup>

That with reiterated crimes he might<sup>enough</sup>

Heap on himself damnation, while he sought<sup>Satan is unchanging</sup>

Evil to others, and enraged might see<sup>+ predictable</sup>

How all his malice served but to bring forth<sup>will hurt + punish himself</sup>

Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown

On man by him seduced, but on himself

Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured.<sup>220</sup>

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool

His mighty stature; on each hand the flames

Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and rolled<sup>"rears," "lights"</sup>

In billows, leave it the midst a horrid vale.

Then with expanded wings he steers his flight<sup>animal actions</sup>

Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air<sup>twice, bird</sup>

That felt unusual weight, till on dry land

He lights, if it were land that ever burned<sup>230</sup>

With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;

And such appeared in hue, as when the force

Of subterranean wind transports a hill<sup>volcano in Italy</sup>

Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side

Of thundering Aetna, whose combustible<sup>230</sup>

And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire,

Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,

And leave a singed bottom all involved

With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole

Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,

no real  
"rest" ->

Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood° *valour in accomplishment*  
 As gods, and by their own recovered strength, *human-like*  
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power. *no reliance on supernatural gifts.*

Satan:

internal  
hymes

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,  
 Said then the lost archangel, *this the seat*  
 That we must change for heaven, *this mournful gloom*  
 For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
 Who now is sovereign can dispose and bid *vs. serve*  
 What shall be right; *furthest from him is best*  
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields  
 Where joy forever dwells: hail horrors, hail  
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell  
 Receive thy new possessor: one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.

chiasmus

p. 54  
Couns

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.  
 What matter where, if I be still the same,  
 And what I should be, all but less than he  
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
 We shall be free; the almighty hath not built  
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:

Here we may reign secure, and in my choice  
 To reign is worth ambition though in hell:  
 Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.

why not  
ask friends  
along? Then  
fight too.

But wherefore let me then our faithful friends,  
 The associates and copartners of our loss  
 Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,  
 And call them not to share with us their part  
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more  
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet

gain/loss

Regained in heaven, or what more lost in hell?

Beelzebub:

So Satan spake, and him Beelzebub  
 Thus answered. Leader of those armies bright,  
 Which but the omnipotent none could have foiled,  
 If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge  
 Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft  
 In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge°  
 Of battle when it raged, in all assaults  
 Their surest signal, they will soon resume  
 New courage and revive, though now they lie

Satan's speech is  
revivifying.Satan's comforting  
tearful  
military voice that  
restores the faith  
of soldiers at  
the direst times.

250

260

270

280

Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,  
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,  
 No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height.°

Satan's  
shieldGolden  
telescope

He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend  
 Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield  
 Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views°

action -  
forwards -  
always hunting  
about "yellow"

At evening from the top of Fesole,  
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,

290

Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.

Satan  
spear

His spear, to equal which the tallest pine  
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
 Of some great admiral, were but a wand,

uses spear as  
a cane!

He walked with to support uneasy steps  
 Over the burning marl, not like those steps°

only stands  
here.

On heaven's azure, and the torrid clime  
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire;

dazed floating  
angels  
like leaves or  
seaweed .300

Nathless he so endured, till on the beach°

Of that inflamed sea, he stood and called  
 His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks  
 In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades°

valley of shadows

High overarched imbower; or scattered sedge°  
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed°

Seaweed

Hath vexed the Red Sea coast; whose waves o'erthrew  
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,

While with perfidious hatred they pursued  
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld°

From the safe shore their floating carcasses  
 And broken chariot wheels, so thick bestrewn

310

Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,  
 Under amazement of their hideous change.

He called so loud, that all the hollow deep  
 Of hell resounded. Princes, potentates,

Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,  
 If such astonishment as this can seize°

divestment

Eternal spirits; or have ye chosen this place  
 After the toil of battle to repose°

Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find°

320



To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?  
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
 To adore the conqueror? who now beholds  
 Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood<sup>thunder, tumult</sup>  
 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon  
 His swift pursuers from heaven gates discern  
 The advantage, and descending tread us down  
 Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts  
 Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.  
 Awake, arise, or be forever fallen.

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung

Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch  
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,  
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight  
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;  
 Yet to their general's voice they soon obeyed

Innumerable. As when the potent rod  
 Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day<sup>just as Sin is sprung</sup>  
 Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud  
 Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,

That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
 Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:

So numberless were those bad angels seen  
 Hovering on wing under the cope of hell<sup>canopy</sup>  
 Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;

Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear  
 Of their great sultan waving to direct  
 Their course, in even balance down they light

On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain;  
 A multitude, like which the populous north

Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass  
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons<sup>Rhene, Danube</sup>  
 Came like a deluge on the south, and spread  
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands.

Forthwith from every squadron and each band  
 The heads and leaders thither haste where stood  
 Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms  
 Excelling human, princely dignities,  
 And powers that erst in heaven sat on thrones;  
 Though of their names in heavenly records now

Be no memorial, blotted out and razed  
 By their rebellion, from the books of life.<sup>370</sup>  
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve  
 Got them new names, till wandering o'er the earth,  
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,  
 By falsities and lies the greatest part  
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake  
 God their creator, and the invisible  
 Glory of him that made them, to transform  
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned  
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,  
 And devils to adore for deities:

Then were they known to men by various names,  
 And various idols through the heathen world.  
 Say, muse, their names then known, who first, who last,  
 Roused from the slumber, on that fiery couch,

At their great emperor's call, as next in worth  
 Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,  
 While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?

The chief were those who from the pit of hell  
 Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix  
 Their seats long after next the seat of God,  
 Their altars by his altar, gods adored

Among the nations round, and durst abide  
 Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned  
 Between the cherubim; yea, often placed  
 Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,  
 Abominations; and with cursèd things

His holy rites, and solemn feasts profaned,  
 And with their darkness durst affront his light.

First Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood<sup>name means King</sup>  
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,  
 Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud  
 Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire<sup>390</sup>  
 To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite<sup>390</sup>

Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,  
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream  
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such<sup>400</sup>  
 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart  
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build  
 His temple right against the temple of God

beginning of  
devils

1: Moloch

"uplifted"